174 Matriarchy, in fact, goes back to the times when primitive man had no exact notions on the causes of childbirth.

For, "it seems," Gautier continues, "that primitive man attributed all birth to parthenogenesis and could only imagine a conception which was immaculate. He saw no ineluctable connection between caressing and gestation. Although he practiced fertilization by instinct, he had no clear idea of this. The word 'father' had no sense for him, and consequently the children could only group themselves around the mother." (2)

2. La conquête du Sahara, p. 190.

On the other hand, since rules of marriage had not yet been established in that period, it was impossible to seek out paternity. It is from this state of things that filiation by the uterine branch is derived. With the totemic beliefs to be found in lower civilizations, the matrilocal system found still another reason for existence. It was linked with exogamy, preventing unions between the closest relatives and between people of different castes, and making incest impossible.

171 In certain primitive Australian groups, /152/ the study of which
601 helps us understand the evolution of societies, there is a system of kinship by classes of kin that is found among the Tuareg and the peoples of the Sudan. It was defined by Morgan, and groups in the first degree brothers, sisters, and cousins; in the second degree the father, mother, and their siblings; in the third degree the grandparents with their siblings, etc.

174 In matriarchy, the natural protector of the child is the brother of his mother. In the same way the obligation for the husband to live with his wife's family is connected with matriarchy. This
591 custom is practiced in the Ahaggar, where the husband must live
●[85] one year in the camp of his parents-in-law, this time being shortened when the young wife has borne a child. When a woman becomes
768 the widow of a man who does not belong to her tribe, she rejoins her tribe and takes her children with her.

844 the child is in a good position; she also rolls her on the ground to put the child in place if need be, but she never makes a vaginal exploration.

845 If the birth does not go normally, the midwife may ask the [75] marabout's help. The latter comes and stands outside the tent, giving verbal advice but never intervening personally; he cannot go near the parturient woman.

844 To give birth the woman squats down on her knees and braces herself on the center stake of the tent. Generally /283/ the baby falls on a layer of fine sand which has been prepared for that purpose. The midwife immediately cuts the umbilical cord, washes the baby in warm water, and makes him cry by pinching him to make sure he is alive. Then the mother takes him, puts a bit of her milk in [85] his nostrils, stretches his nose so that it will be long and narrow, and presses his head between her hands to give it an elongated shape. [174] This custom is certainly a vestige of cranial deformation, which is no longer practiced among the Tuareg but which was formerly common among the Egyptians.

As soon as the father learns of the birth of the baby, he has a 846 sheep butchered and sends it to the wife's camp. The sheep is meant to feed her and the people who have assisted her. The woman is made to absorb a great deal of meat bouillon. Sometimes the new mother gets up two or three days after confinement.

851 The birth of a boy is welcomed with more joy than that of a girl. [84] In the first case, all the people, men and women, come to con- [85] gratulate the mother, but if it is a girl only the women come to see her. During this visit the women often put yellow ocher under [75] their eyes and around their mouths to keep away the bad genii which are always supposed to prowl around in tents where a newborn baby has just arrived.

846 On the seventh day after the birth, the woman returns to her husband's camp, accompanied by the women of her family and her brothers, if she has any. The father then sees his child for the first time.

841 The cessation of the menses during pregnancy is interpreted
843 discerningly, that is, that the baby is fed by the discharge and rejects the waste products from it at birth (placenta).

When a woman cannot have a child, her husband goes to find
842 a marabout who sells him an amulet which the woman must wear
[788] next to her skin. The wife, for her part, goes to pray near old
[782] tombs known to be those of venerated people. She asks God's
769 pardon for her faults and asks death to intercede for her with the creator. If the woman conceives, the husband takes the marabout
[431] an offering which sometimes consists of as much as several head of livestock.

After confinement the wife has no sexual relations with her
846 husband for a month and ten days. On the fortieth day the husband
834 makes his wife a present of sandals and new clothing.
431

Nursing lasts on the average from two to two and one-half
862 years. Boys, however, are weaned six months later than girls, for they are more fragile, it seems, and need stronger food.

In camp the young child is placed on a cushion, lying on his
854 stomach, and kept in place by a cloth band which passes over his loins and ties under the cushion. His wrists are also sometimes attached. Sometimes a wooden frame made of arches is placed over him; it holds up cloths and protects him from flies, light,
[184] and sandstorms, all at the same time. The Ioullimmiden Tuareg use little cradles which are hooked to the arches of the tent.

At moving time the mother carries her child on her back or on her hip, held by a loincloth knotted over the breasts. This
[171] method, also used by the Sudanese, does not seem to disturb the child, in spite of the /286/ mother's movements, which are some-
[853] times quite sudden. If he cries, she nurses him until all the milk is gone; there is no question of hours or measure for feedings.

The long nursing period as well as the carrying system causes
[826] the woman's breasts to sag rapidly after the first child. For the
851 Tuareg, however, aesthetics count less than motherhood, which
517 ennobles the woman.

4: Benhazera--1 G-5 (1905) 1908 MS25 Tuareg MS25
Hoggar

Book One

The Tuareg in their Private and Public Life

Part One

The Tuareg in their Private Life

Chapter I

Birth. Childhood

In Tamashek, birth is called "tiouit" ⵜⵉⵡⵉⵜ. There is no 844
special observance to note concerning the birth of a child
among the Tuareg. However, there is greater joy if it is a [542]
boy. People come to congratulate the parents and, seven days 851
later, the latter serve a more or less lavish feast, depending
on their means, the feast being preceded by the recitation of
the "fatiha" (first sura of the Koran). Those present who do [789]
not know Arabic limit themselves during this recitation to
holding their open hands together like a book. It is on this [533]
day that the child is given its name.

On this subject, I think I should note that especially 551
among the Kel R'ela (a noble tribe of the Ahaggar), many [565]
children were given the names of wild beasts or animals.

Examples of Men's Names

Amellal, addax, meha /?/
Abeggui, jackal
Amayas, cheetah
Akhou, wild animal